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ABSTRACT

According to traditional theories, prejudice toward racial, ethnic, and other social groups is the result of affective and cognitive factors. However, there are few studies in the literature that have examined the relative importance of these factors in prejudicial attitudes. This study examined the roles played by affect, stereotypic beliefs, and symbolic beliefs in intergroup evaluations. College students (N=82) completed measures of prejudice, stereotypes, affect, symbolic beliefs, and right-wing authoritarianism. The results indicated that each determinant was a function of not only the target minority group, but also the subject's level of authoritarianism. The results obtained in this study indicated that prejudice was indeed multidimensional, and that the relative importance of each determinant was largely dependent upon the target group under examination. It is interesting to note that while affective associates and symbolic beliefs were highly associated with subjects' attitudes toward specific target groups, stereotypic beliefs were not predictive of evaluations. While insightful, the results of this study do not provide a complete story of prejudicial attitudes. Current research is being conducted to further understand the roles played by affective associates and cognitive information in prejudicial attitudes. (ABL)

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Assessing the Determinants of Prejudicial Attitudes

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Abstract

According to traditional theories, prejudice toward racial, ethnic, and other social groups is the result of affective and cognitive factors. However, there are few studies in the literature that have examined the relative importance of these factors in prejudicial attitudes. The present research examined the roles played by affect, stereotypic beliefs, and symbolic beliefs in intergroup evaluations. The results indicated that each determinant was, indeed, important, and that the relative importance was a function of not only the target minority group, but also the subject's level of authoritarianism. Implications of the present study for future research are discussed.

Assessing the determinants of prejudicial attitudes

The study of prejudice has a long history in the field of social psychology. For over half a century, researchers have been interested in determining the causes (or, at least, the correlates) of prejudice (c.f. Allport, 1954; Katz & Braly,1933). Prejudice has been defined as a "negative *attitude* [italics added] toward a socially defined group and toward any person perceived to be a member of that group" (Ashmore, 1970, p.253). This conceptualization of prejudice as an attitude is important, allowing it to be studied in the same manner as any other attitude (Stangor, Sullivan, & Ford, in press). Further, by employing this paradigm, one can use attitude theories to better understand the correlates of prejudice. Zanna and Rempel (1988) have suggested that attitudes should be viewed as evaluations based on three types of information: (1) affective associates, (2) cognitive information, and (3) information concerning past behaviors or behavioral intentions. Using this model as a vehicle to study prejudice is a natural extension, as most researchers have postulated that both affective and cognitive processes (in addition to behaviors) are important determinants of prejudicial attitudes (Harding, Proshansky, Kutner, & Chein, 1969; Dovidio & Gaertner, 1986). However, while affective associates and cognitive processes have long been implicated as important determinants of prejudice, there are few studies in the literature which have concurrently examined their relative importance in the formation of intergroup attitudes. The present study, therefore, was an attempt to further

understand the roles played by these factors in the development and maintenance of prejudicial attitudes.

Recently, Stangor et al. (in press) investigated the relative importance of affective and cognitive variables as determinants of prejudice. In a series of studies, they revealed that subjects' emotional responses toward a series of target groups were more consistent and stronger predictors of their attitudes than stereotypes (which were assessed at both the individual and consensual level). However, their method of assessing emotional responses can be called into question. Specifically, their affect measure was closed-ended, simply asking subjects to indicate which (if any) of ten emotions had ever been evoked by the target group. This approach, while having its merits, does not provide subjects the opportunity to indicate any idiosyncratic emotions that might be elicited by a group, assumes that different target groups evoke the same emotions, and, finally, that different individuals construe these emotions identically for different groups. A more comprehensive measure of affective associates should assess both individual and consensual emotional responses, in accord with measures of stereotypes.

As well, Stangor et al. neglected to measure how intergroup evaluations are affected by the extent to which individuals perceive outgroups as violating important values. This approach, put forward by researchers such as Sears (1988), asserts that prejudice is based upon not only affect, but also the belief that outgroups are perceived to be threatening an individual's core

values. For some people, intergroup attitudes might be based upon these cognitively-based symbolic beliefs.

The present study was designed to assess the relative importance of affective associates, stereotypic beliefs, and symbolic beliefs in prejudicial attitudes. In contrast to Stangor et al. (in press), this study used open-ended measures of the three possible determinants, in order to obtain a more sensitive assessment of each individual's feelings and beliefs. Of interest to the researchers was to examine if the determinants of prejudice vary across target groups. The target groups used in this study were English Canadians, French Canadians, Pakistanis, Homosexuals, and Native Indians.

As well, the researchers were interested in whether one determinant might be differentially effective in predicting prejudicial attitudes for individuals varying on certain individual difference dimensions. One variable hypothesized to moderate the relationship between prejudice and the three predictor variables was right-wing authoritarianism (Altemeyer, 1981, 1988). Specifically, it was predicted that the prejudice of high right-wing authoritarians would be primarily based upon symbolic beliefs, because such individuals wish to maintain social traditions and conventions, and typically reject the beliefs of outgroups.

Method

Subjects

Eighty-two subjects (Mean Age=20.0) enrolled in introductory psychology classes at the University of Waterloo participated in

return for partial course credit. For the present analyses, all subjects (not only those who described themselves as English Canadians) were included for analysis[1]. The results of 11 subjects were discarded, as they did not follow the instructions.

Materials

Assessment of Prejudice. To measure attitudes, subjects were asked to complete a 101-point (0 to 100) evaluation thermometer for each of the five groups. Past research has shown this instrument to be a valid indicator of intergroup attitudes (Sears, 1988; Stangor et al., in press). The order in which they evaluated the groups was randomized, though subjects were aware of the five groups prior to the commencement of the evaluation process.

Assessment of Stereotypes. To assess stereotypes, the researchers followed a procedure similar to that described by Eagly and Mladinic (1989). Briefly, subjects were asked to list the characteristics they would use to describe typical members of each group. When subjects completed this task for each of the five groups, they returned to the beginning of the section and rated each characteristic as increasingly positive (+2) or negative (-2) on a five-point scale. Upon the completion of this task, subjects were asked to return to the beginning of the section once again, and to indicate the percentage of typical group members that possessed each characteristic.

A stereotype measure was calculated for each group in the following manner. First, the evaluation of each characteristic was multiplied by the percentage of group members believed to possess

that characteristic. Second, these scores were summed, and then divided by the number of characteristics listed. This scoring procedure has been successful in past research (Eagly & Mladinic, 1989)[2].

Assessment of Affect. To assess affect, subjects were asked to list the feelings or emotions they experience when they see, meet, or even think about typical members of the group. As with the stereotype measure, they were asked to evaluate the negativity-positivity of each emotion and, indicate the percentage of group members that produce each emotion. An affect measure was calculated in the same manner as the measure of stereotype.

Assessment of Symbolic Beliefs. To assess symbolic beliefs, subjects were asked to list the values, customs, or traditions which they believed were facilitated or blocked by typical group members. Upon, the completion of this task, they were asked to indicate the extent to which each value was facilitated or blocked by the group and, the percentage of typical group members whom they believed facilitated or blocked each value. A symbolic belief measure was calculated in the same manner as the measure of stereotype.

Assessment of Right-wing authoritarianism. Right-wing authoritarianism (RWA) was measured by having subjects complete a short version of Altemeyer's (1988) RWA Scale. Ten items were selected that adequately represented the three components of the RWA construct; authoritarian submission, authoritarian aggression, and conventionalism. Sample items representing each component

include "Obedience and respect for authority are the most important virtues children should learn," "In these troubled times laws have to be enforced without mercy, especially when dealing with the agitators and revolutionaries who are stirring things up," and "Atheists and others who have rebelled against the established religions are no doubt every bit as good and virtuous as those who attend church regularly" (sample item 3 reverse scored). In a separate sample, the 10-item and the full 30-item scale correlated at .89.

Procedure

Subjects arrived at the lab knowing that the study was intended to measure group evaluations. They were then given general instructions as to the procedure of the study. During these instructions, an effort was made to reduce the demands of listing only positive statements. Subjects were then provided a consent form to sign (no subjects declined participation at this point). Upon the signing of the consent form, subjects started on the evaluation task, which took approximately 45 minutes. While all subjects completed the thermometer measure first, the order of the three determinants was counterbalanced[3]. Subjects then completed the RWA scale and, finally, were asked to provide demographic information. They were then fully debriefed as to the goals of the study.

Results

Evaluation Thermometer

The mean evaluation scores for the target groups are presented

in Table 1. There was a wide range of variability in evaluations toward the five groups, as shown in a significant one-way repeated analysis of variance (ANOVA), $F(4,280)=54.50$, $p<.001$. This demonstrates that subjects held (and were willing to express) differential attitudes toward the various groups. Not surprisingly, English Canadians (the ingroup for most subjects) were evaluated most favourably ($M=81.42$), while attitudes toward Homosexuals were most negative ($M=44.13$). Post-hoc tests revealed that all groups were evaluated differently, except for French Canadians and Pakistanis.

Also presented in Table 1 are the means and standard deviations for each of the predictor variables for the five target groups. Similar to the evaluation measure, English Canadians typically "scored" highest, with Homosexuals receiving the lowest values.

Insert Table 1 About Here

Correlations Between The Three Predictor Variables

To insure that the three predictor variables were not completely redundant, Pearson product-moment correlations were computed between these variables for all target groups. The five correlation matrices are presented in Table 2. Not surprisingly, the correlations were positive, indicating a relation between the predictors. However, they were not high enough to indicate that the measures were eliciting identical information. For example, although the affect-stereotype correlation was strongest for four

of the five groups, in each case more than half of the variance in one factor was unaccounted for by the other. Particularly pleasing were the relatively low magnitudes of the correlations between symbolic beliefs and the other predictors. This pattern of results indicates that the symbolic belief measure elicited unique information.

Insert Table 2 About Here

Correlations Between The Predictor Variables and Attitudes

Also presented in Table 2 are the correlations between the evaluation thermometer (the attitude measure) and the three predictors for each target group. These correlations were positive and substantial, indicating that each determinant is related to prejudice. However, there was no consistent pattern between target groups, indicating that one single predictor can not sufficiently account for prejudicial attitudes.

The Prediction of Prejudice

In order to assess the relative importance of affect, stereotypes, and symbolic beliefs in intergroup attitudes, the three determinants were entered simultaneously into standard regression analyses (with prejudice as the criterion variable). These analyses provided us the opportunity to assess the extent to which each predictor variable uniquely contributed to the prediction of the subjects' attitude. A separate analysis was performed for each of the target groups.

The results of these analyses are presented in Table 3. From

these results it is clear that the answer to the question of what best predicts prejudice is largely dependent upon the target group under examination. While affect provided the largest unique contribution in regards to attitudes toward English Canadians, French Canadians, and Native Indians, symbolic beliefs were most uniquely associated with attitudes toward Pakistanis and Homosexuals. As well, for French Canadians, a second correlate, symbolic beliefs, was significantly associated with subjects' evaluations. It is apparent that symbolic beliefs play an integral role in attitudes toward outgroups, as evidenced by the fact that in three cases its unique contribution to the attitude measure was significant. Interestingly, stereotypic beliefs, the focus of much empirical research, played a relatively minor role in predicting subjects' attitudes.

Insert Table 3 About Here

Effects of RWA on the Prediction of Prejudice

It was hypothesized that the prejudice of individuals high in right-wing authoritarianism would be largely based on symbolic beliefs. In order to test this prediction, a median split was first performed on RWA scale scores. Hierarchical regression analyses were then performed separately for high and low RWAs whereby affect and stereotypes were entered simultaneously in the first block, with symbolic beliefs entering as a second block. It was predicted that for high RWAs, symbolic beliefs would account for a significant amount of variance beyond that accounted for by

the variables entered in the first block. For those individuals low in right-wing authoritarianism, symbolic beliefs were expected to provide little additional predictability., The results of these analyses for the four outgroups are presented in Table 4. These results provide strong support for the hypothesis. For low RWAs, symbolic beliefs accounted for little variance beyond that of the other determinants. For high RWAs, symbolic beliefs accounted for a significant amount of variability beyond that provided for by the other predictors. With the exception of Native Indians, symbolic beliefs accounted for significant amounts of variability.[4] These results were generally replicated in a second study, with the main exception being the significance of symbolic beliefs as a predictor of attitudes toward Native Indians for high RWAs (Haddock, Zanna, & Esses, 1991).

Insert Table 4 About Here

Discussion

This study was performed to examine the roles played by affect, stereotypic beliefs, and symbolic beliefs in prejudicial attitudes. As outlined, previous research in this domain has been scarce, and has neglected to consider the role of symbolic beliefs. Past attempts to comprehend the correlates of prejudice have left many important questions unanswered. The results obtained in the current study indicate that prejudice is indeed multidimensional, and that the relative importance of each determinant is largely dependent upon the target group under examination. It is

interesting to note that while affective associates and symbolic beliefs were highly associated with subjects' attitudes toward specific target groups, stereotypic beliefs were not predictive of evaluations.

As well, it was observed that the three determinants are differentially influential for individuals varying in right-wing authoritarianism. Individuals high in right-wing authoritarianism were observed to form their evaluations primarily on the basis of symbolic beliefs. This is not surprising, in that these individuals are typically traditional in nature and disdainful toward beliefs contrary to their own.

The open-ended paradigm employed in the present study is advantageous compared to those often used in past research. The stereotype measure, in addition to obtaining a measure of individual stereotypes, provides the opportunity to examine other important questions. For example, Devine (1989) has observed that people high and low in prejudice hold identical stereotypes, but that these stereotypes are more accessible to individuals high in prejudice. By using a stereotype classification system proposed by Erlich (1973), the researchers were able to classify subjects' responses. A comparison of the responses provided by high and low RWAs revealed few differences.

While insightful, the results of the present study do not provide a complete story of prejudicial attitudes. For example, the role of behavioral information should also be the target of future research. Clement, Gardner, and Smythe (1977) discovered a

positive relation between behavioral contact and attitudes toward French Canadians for Anglophone high school students. In regards to the current paradigm, the researchers are presently using an open-ended behavioral measure in an ongoing research program.

At the present time, the investigators are conducting studies designed to further understand the roles played by affective associates and cognitive information in prejudicial attitudes. For example, the results of the present study suggest that symbolic beliefs might be especially important in evaluating target groups that are often perceived as violating traditional values. The researchers are presently engaged in a research program designed to test this hypothesis. Research by Clifton, McGrath, and Wick (1976) and Deaux, Winton, Crowley, and Lewis (1985) has revealed that gender stereotypes of women can be multicategorical, including dimensions such as "housewife" and "career woman." If one of these groups is perceived by some to be advocating social change, it is possible that attitudes toward them might be based primarily upon symbolic beliefs.

The individual's affective state at the time of evaluation is undoubtedly an important determinant of intergroup attitudes. Esses and Zanna (1989) have observed that individuals in a negative mood are significantly more likely to express negative stereotypes. It would be interesting to examine if an individual's affective state affects the remaining attitudinal components, and, if so, whether the same psychological mechanism was operating for each determinant.

The results of the present study also allow for speculation concerning the elimination and consequences of prejudicial attitudes. For example, are different methods of prejudice reduction more likely to succeed for attitudes primarily based on different determinants? As well, do the consequences of prejudice differ depending upon the main correlate of that attitude?

In conclusion, the results of the present study allow for much elaboration and speculation concerning the conceptualization of prejudice, and should help insure that our knowledge of the determinants and consequences of prejudicial attitudes continues to grow.

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Footnotes

[1]In a larger group of subjects, analyses using only subjects who described themselves as English Canadian revealed no major differences as compared to analyses using all subjects.

[2]Evans (1991) has warned against using correlational analyses for assessing the relation between a multiplicative composite and other variables. However, extraordinarily high correlation coefficients (all above 0.90) between the composite measure and a Σ valence/n measure would appear to diminish this possible problem.

[3]Stangor et al. (in press) counterbalanced their measures and observed no order effects.

[4]Standard regression analyses yielded an identical set of results.

Table 1

Mean Evaluations for Target Groups

Statistic	EC	FC	NI	P	H
Mean Attitude	81.42 (13.40)	69.07 (20.15)	66.20 (18.02)	58.83 (22.18)	44.13 (26.77)
Mean Stereotype	0.24 (0.58)	0.24 (0.67)	-0.15 (0.58)	-0.02 (0.67)	-0.19 (0.87)
Mean Affect	0.56 (0.61)	0.09 (0.71)	0.02 (0.63)	-0.09 (0.70)	-0.46 (0.83)
Mean Symbolic	0.24 (0.65)	0.01 (0.80)	0.13 (0.76)	0.16 (0.69)	-0.31 (1.00)

Note. Standard deviations are in parentheses.

Table 2

Correlations Between Determinants and Attitudes for Five Target Groups

English Canadians

	Affect	Symbolic	Attitude
Ster.	.55	.11	.11
Aff.		.20	.25
Sym.			.09

French Canadians

	Affect	Symbolic	Attitude
Ster.	.61	.44	.49
Aff.		.40	.60
Sym.			.49

Native Indians

	Affect	Symbolic	Attitude
Ster.	.54	.25	.24
Aff.		.25	.44
Sym.			.17

Pakistanis

	Affect	Symbolic	Attitude
Ster.	.72	.20	.30
Aff.		.15	.32
Sym.			.58

Homosexuals

	Affect	Symbolic	Attitude
Ster.	.69	.33	.48
Aff.		.23	.43
Sym.			.50

Table 3

Standard Regression Analyses-All Subjects

Target Group	Variable	Unstandardized Regression Coefficient	t
Eng. Cdn.	Affect	5.82	1.85'''
	Stereotype	-0.97	-0.30
	Symbolic	0.80	0.32
French Cdn.	Affect	11.64	3.47'
	Stereotype	3.77	1.04
	Symbolic	6.82	2.61''
Native Indian	Affect	12.21	3.26'
	Stereotype	-0.03	-0.01
	Symbolic	1.54	0.57
Pakistani	Affect	6.68	1.52
	Stereotype	1.18	0.26
	Symbolic	17.61	5.62'
Homosexual	Affect	5.63	1.29
	Stereotype	7.58	1.76'''
	Symbolic	10.04	3.69'

Note. ' $p<.01$ '' $p<.05$ ''' $p<.10$

Table 4

Hierarchical Regression Analyses for High and Low RWAs

Low RWAs

Target Group	Determinants	R^2 Change (%)	F Change
French Cdn.	Aff,Ster	53.9	19.26*
	Symbolic	4.5	3.45
Native Indian	Aff,Ster	30.8	7.34**
	Symbolic	2.0	0.93
Pakistani	Aff,Ster	37.8	10.02*
	Symbolic	3.7	2.05
Homosexual	Aff,Ster	52.4	18.13*
	Symbolic	1.0	0.67

High RWAs

Target Group	Determinants	R^2 Change (%)	F Change
French Cdn.	Aff,Ster	24.2	5.11***
	Symbolic	9.5	4.45***
Native Indian	Aff,Ster	15.0	2.83
	Symbolic	0.3	0.10
Pakistani	Aff,Ster	7.6	1.30
	Symbolic	35.8	19.57*
Homosexual	Aff,Ster	7.2	1.23
	Symbolic	19.6	8.29**

Note. * $p<.001$ ** $p<.01$ *** $p<.05$